

AMERICAN SCHOOLS OF ORIENTAL RESEARCH

JERUSALEM AND BAGHDAD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWSLETTER

Confidential

Not for publication

This, the first newsletter of the 1957-58 season of the Joint Expedition to Nippur, was written by Director Richard C. Haines for the Oriental Institute. Due to my joining the expedition late this year and with Mr. Haines' authorization to use the letter, it is being sent out to its ASOR audience. To Mr. Haines I express my thanks.

Newsletter #2
1957-58
Joint Expedition to Nippur

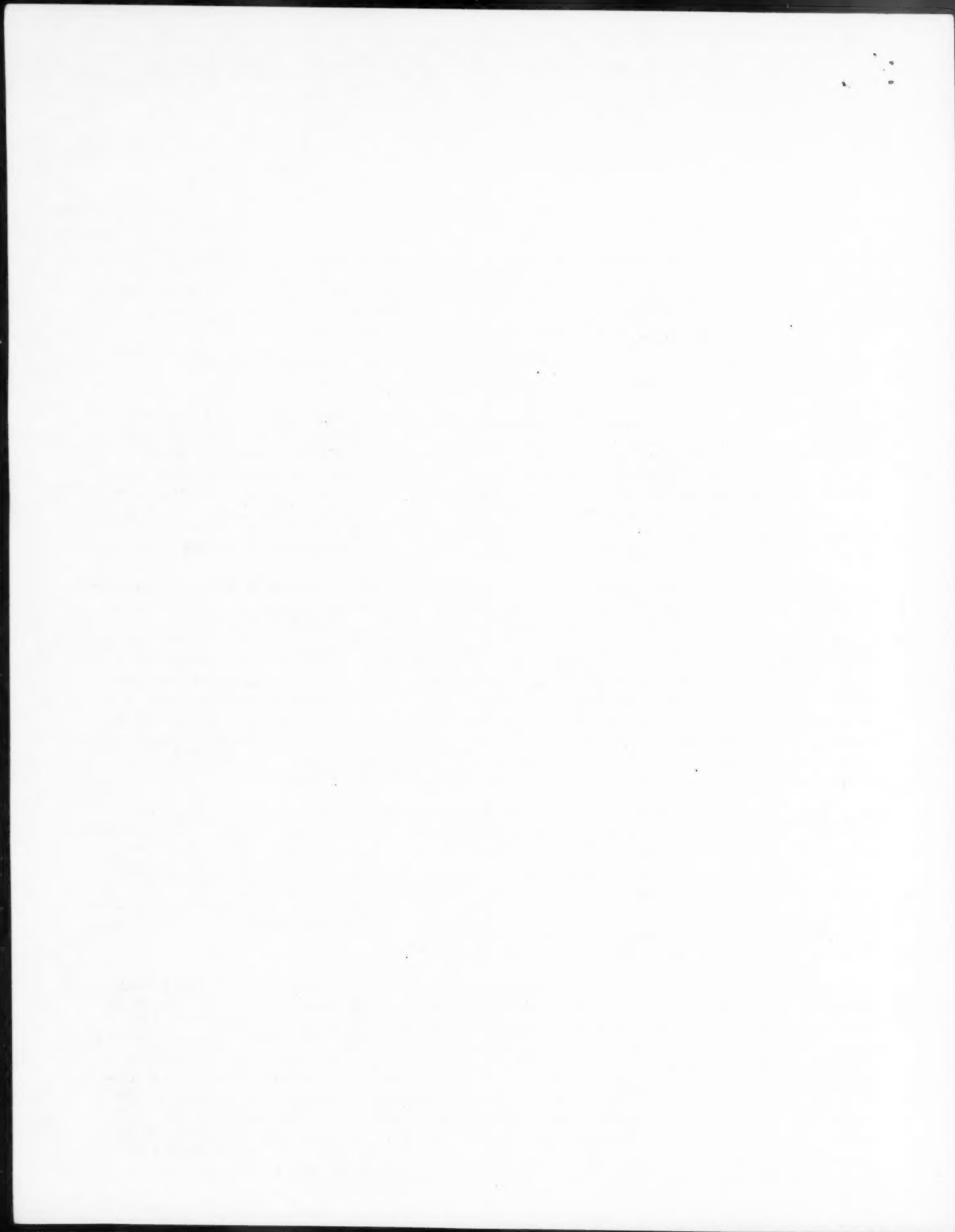
Vaughn E. Crawford, Director Baghdad School
Iraq, November 6, 1957

We are settled once again in Afak in the Diwaniyah Liwa of Iraq and have started our sixth season of digging at Nuffar, the site of the once-important religious center of Nippur in ancient Sumer. Once again, the expedition is jointly sponsored by the Baghdad School of the American Schools of Oriental Research and the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. We have been digging for less than a week - and stopped twice by dust storms in that time - so that there is little to report about the actual work that we came out here to do.

Our first aim is to complete the excavation of a large Parthian building which was constructed over an older temple to Inanna. About a third of these buildings were uncovered during the fifth season in 1955-56 and we hope to complete the job this winter. The character of the Parthian building is unknown. We now have only a hazy idea of the plan with a corner of a room or courtyard here and a possible doorway there emerging from the earth. From the size of the building and the width of its walls, we know it is one of some importance - perhaps a palace or a temple although there is no semblance of a temple plan at the present time. A few more weeks of digging should clarify the plan and give a few clues of the purpose of the building.

The expedition staff assembled in Baghdad on October 25th. Donald Hansen, our archaeologist, came by the way of London, Paris, Rome, and Athens. George Dales, our assistant archaeologist and photographer, came by the way of Italy and the Bahrein Island. James Knudstad, our architect, came by the way of Spain and Italy. I came by ship to Beirut and from there through Damascus to Baghdad by bus without interruption or incident. (Vaughn Crawford, our epigrapher, expects to arrive in camp about the first of December.)

We left Baghdad for Afak on October 27th. The Intense road-building program that is being carried out all over Iraq made our trip an easy one and our 1948 jeep and 1953 jeep station wagon were equal to the task. We stopped at Babylon on the way down and saw the famous Ishtar gate and the enigmatic Babylon lion. We were fortunate in visiting the site before Professor Lenzen of the Deutsches Archaeologisches Institut at Baghdad had finished a short campaign there this fall. He received us most cordially and showed us over the excavations he had made. After a lunch beside the Hilla canal, we went on to Diwaniyah and from there over the now familiar road to Afak. We were expected and enthusiastically welcomed by the villagers as well as our own servants.



I had arrived in Baghdad two weeks before we came to Afak, in order to rent an expedition house, buy the supplies which could be obtained locally, hire the household help, and send notice to the central Iraqi village of Shurgat for those pickmen whom we wanted for this season's work. (Since the time that the Germans excavated Assur, the nearby village of Shurgat has supplied the pickmen for almost all of the archaeological work done in Iraq. Fathers teach their sons and we are now at least two generations removed from the original pickmen trained at Assur.) This year we have several older expert pickmen - some had worked at the Institute's dig at Tell Asmar with Dr. Frankfort in the 30's - but more younger men with various levels of experience. The shovelmen and the boys who carry the dirt out of the excavation are hired from the local villages. This week we are digging with less than 100 men but expect to increase as we gradually open up more of the area.

Our house help is headed by Abdullah Sultan who had worked in the expedition houses at Tell Asmar and Khorsabad as a young man and with us at Nippur since 1949. This year, we had difficulty in finding a cook due, I imagine, to the great number of Americans in Baghdad and consequently the great demand for men who know western cooking. After my failure to find one, Abdullah suggested that he try. Not more than an hour later, as I was walking down Rashid Street, I saw Abdullah sitting in an open-air cafe and earnestly talking to a clean-looking young man who was later presented to me as Mahmoud, a cook from Basra who had come to Baghdad to find a job. He is so much better than the cook we had last season that we can only hope he will be willing to spend the winter in a small Iraqi village and forego the glamour and excitement of the capital city. In addition to Abdullah and Mahmoud, we have two houseboys for them to order around.

We have rented a large well-built house in the middle of the village. The neighborhood is noisy but that is to be expected. The roosters start to crow at eleven in the evening and the radios in the bazaar nearby are turned on full volume by six in the morning. The dogs sleep all day so that they can bark all night at the baying jackals who close in on the village after dark. A story goes that in olden times the jackals inhabited the villages and the dogs were outside. After much persuading, the jackals agreed to change places with the dogs for just one night but the dogs, once in the villages, decided to stay. And ever since, the jackals have been trying to regain their rightful place and the dogs have been vociferously repelling them. Except for a few petty annoyances - like giant cockroaches which must have been here before either the jackals or dogs, and the all-permeating dust - we are very comfortable indeed.

This is our beginning. As we settle down to life in Afak and the work on the mound of Nippur progresses, we shall become more and more occupied with archaeological matters and less and less, we hope, with household management.

Richard C. Haines
Field Director

AMERICAN SCHOOLS OF ORIENTAL RESEARCH
Jerusalem and Baghdad
ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWSLETTER

Confidential

Not for publication

* * * * *

Newsletter #3

1957-58 Jerusalem, November 13, 1957.

After one of the busiest summers in the recent history of the American School things have returned to a somewhat more normal pace. Each one continues to be busy at his own tasks and there is still plenty to do but without the sense of hustle-bustle--somewhat more easy going as is proverbial for this part of the world.

Probably the most important project to report is the joint McCormick Theological Seminary-ASOR dig at Khirbet at-Tubeiqah (Beth-Zur) which lasted from October 14 to November 8. Dr. Ovid R. Sellers, who led the excavation of this site in 1931, was again the director and the writer was archaeological advisor. Others on the staff included Robert W. Funk, Paul W. Lapp, and John L. McKenzie, area supervisors; Mrs. Paul Lapp, in charge of pottery registration, with Mrs. O. R. Sellers assisting in pottery drawing and reconstruction. Emil Abu Daiyeh was general foreman and undertook the negotiations for the use of the land. Mr. Soubhi Muktadi served as surveyor and Mr. Mahfouz Nassar as formatore.

The aim of this season's work was to attempt to clarify the defense system of the site since in the previous excavation the operation was confined mainly to the living areas of the city. Consequently, two fields were opened on the eastern slope of the tell where it was reasonably expected that defense walls might appear. Field I, under the supervision of Drs. Funk and McKenzie, consisted of eight five-meter squares. Here defense walls tentatively identified as of the Middle Bronze, Iron I and II, and Hellenistic periods were laid bare. The MB wall was especially massive. A construction tentatively identified as a tower and dating from the Iron II period may be a part of the defenses of Rehoboam, as was suggested by one prominent archaeologist who visited the site.

Field II, under the supervision of Drs. Richardson and Lapp, consisted of five five-meter squares. Here a massive rampart of the Hellenistic period was uncovered. Part of it was found to have been built over the remains of Iron Age walls. A large cistern was thoroughly investigated yielding whole or nearly whole water pitchers and cooking pots of the late Hellenistic period (c. 100 B.C.). A Hellenistic bath with a drain was discovered and in the last days of the dig what may be tentatively identified as a grain pit installation was partially uncovered.

The small finds of this season's dig at Beth-Zur were far from spectacular. Of greatest interest was an exquisitely carved ivory sphinx measuring 2 x 3/4 inches found in an Iron I-II context. Next to this in interest was a fine cone seal measuring 3/4 inches in height and in diameter. It has two fat and one lean kine and a scorpion nicely engraved on the face of it and is well preserved. Other small finds include scarabs, beads, stamped Rhodian jar handles, and Ptolemaic, Seleucid, and Hasmonaean coins. I think all persons concerned would agree that this was an eminently successful dig not only in terms of the results achieved but especially in the

additional field experience gained by staff and students alike. The academic program of the school for the next several weeks will consist mainly of the detailed study of the finds and the preparation of the report under the guidance of Dr. Sellers, Professor of Archaeology for the present academic year.

Next in importance and of particular interest to residents of the school in recent years is the work being done in the library. We are now blessed by a strong, steady flow of electricity and have taken advantage of it by installing three large florescent light fixtures. By night the library now glows as with the shining of the noon-day sun! And with only a little more than half the consumption of electricity! In addition, an intensive and careful survey of the library's holdings, carried on by Dr. Funk and Father Joseph Fitzmyer, revealed the absolute necessity of extensive book buying if the kind of research expected of staff and students was to be carried on. By the time you read this letter more than sixty basic volumes will have been accessioned since July 1.

As was reported in the last Newsletter, some improvements in the physical plant were begun with the redecorating of the living room in the Director's House. The next major project has been the garden. No extensive changes in the arrangement of the beds had taken place since the original plan was drawn up in 1931. The large beds between the trees at either end of the garden have been replaced with round beds built up with stones to a height of about eighteen inches around each of the four trees. In these beds have been put a variety of small plants. The beds along the hedge on the east side have been widened and the two narrow beds on the west side have been removed. New white crushed stone has been spread and with a few other changes an appearance of spaciousness has been achieved without sacrificing much actual bed space. This work has been under the supervision of Mrs. Sellers with the assistance of Mrs. Funk to both of whom I am grateful for the attention they have given to the details of this transformation.

On October 23 the Director had the privilege of introducing the Wadi Qumran area to a large party of government officials including the Lord Mayor of Jerusalem, Rawhi Bey Khatib, and Mrs. Khatib, the U.S. Consul General, Dr. Albert Franklin, and Mrs. Franklin, the U.S. Vice-Consuls, Andrew Kilgore and Eugene Bird, and their wives, as well as a number of other persons from the city and the school. For most of these people this was their first visit to this area and they were all most appreciative of this service which the American School was able to render.

The British School of Archaeology has already begun its last season of excavation at Tell es-Sultan (O.T. Jericho). The work has been in progress now for nearly a month and will continue on into the middle of January or later. Although the American School is not collaborating this year we shall watch this last season with great interest for the further evidence which may appear relative to the very great antiquity of this site.

In spite of the sensationalistic newspaper stories which you are reading which tend to distort the situation here in the Near East we have

had a few visitors as well as two new students. The latter include Dr. John L. McKenzie, S.J., Prof. of Old Testament at West Baden College, West Baden Springs, Indiana, and recently author of a book on the Old Testament--The Two Edged Sword--Miss Beatrice Goff of Yale University who plans to divide her time between Jerusalem, Egypt, and Iraq, completing manuscripts in the field of Near East art. Residents of and visitors to the school for longer or shorter durations have included Dr. and Mrs. T. Cuyler Young of Princeton University, Dr. and Mrs. Bernard E. Meland of the University of Chicago, Prof. Arnold B. Rhodes of the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., with two of his students--Mr. Lewis M. Johnson and Mr. John T. Bare--Mr. and Mrs. Ernest J. Frei of the Philippines, and at present Dr. Christoph Clairmont of the Classics Department at Yale University who is preparing the publication of the glass from Dura-Europos. We also enjoyed the company of Mr. and Mrs. William A. Eddy for dinner. Col. Eddy was the first U. S. representative to both Saudi Arabia and Yemen and being a life-long resident of the Middle East has a penetrating knowledge of Arab life and folk-literature which he most graciously shared with us.

Before this letter reaches you the Director will have returned from attending the sessions of the Second Arab Archaeological Congress in Baghdad upon special invitation arranged by Said Bey Dura, the Director of the Department of Antiquities for the government of Jordan. You may look forward to a report on these sessions in the next newsletter.

H. Neil Richardson, Director

Jerusalem School